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PROTECTING YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

It's been a long day. You've been felling trees and clearing brush since early this morning. Your muscles ache, you're tired, hot and sweaty. Just a few more trees to drop and you are done for the day. As you take a moment to rest, you sit down and notice a gash in your chaps. At first it doesn't click, and then suddenly you realize what happened and give thanks that you remembered to wear them. You decide that maybe it is a good time to head for home and pick it up where you left off tomorrow.

A true story and one that is shared by many woodland owners. Power tools like chain saws and pesticides are common tools that woodland owners use regularly to shape their woodlands to meet their goals. Taking the proper precautions and using these tools correctly can insure that you will be able to enjoy your woodland for a long time to come.

What are some things you should consider when working in the woods?

- You should wear the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the job. Whether you are using power equipment or pesticides, wear clothing and equipment designed to protect you from serious injuries or illnesses. The appropriate PPE is listed in the operator's manual for most power equipment and on the pesticide label for all chemicals.

- Always be aware of your surroundings when working in the woods. Look for all standing dead trees, lodged trees and other hazards. Be especially careful when working in an area with uneven ground or felled trees. When working with power equipment, have a "path of retreat" planned in advance. Make sure you know where others are working and that they know where you are. NEVER EVER leave a partially cut tree standing.
- Wear clothing that is appropriate and protects you from common injuries and insects that inhabit your woodland. Wear boots that provide adequate ankle support, sturdy pants and a shirt that cannot be easily penetrated by branches or insect bites. Also, wear light colored clothing so you can see ticks that may be on you, and use an approved tick repellent containing DEET.

It's an old saying but it is still true today – "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure."

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